

Tedo Dundua

Professor,
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Pious Formulas on Georgian Money¹

Deities are depicted on the coins struck in pagan Colchis (Western Georgia) and Iberia (Eastern and Southern Georgia). With these states being baptized in the 4th c., the gods were substituted by the saints. Christian pious formulas also appeared on money issued in kingdom of Georgia, obviously less “pious” than the inscriptions on the Byzantine coins. Greek inscriptions are mostly like as follows: “God, do assist . . .”, “Holy Virgin, do assist . . .”, “Cross, protect . . .”. And we have different pious formulas on Georgian coins: “Christ, exalt . . .”, etc. (D. R. Sear. Byzantine Coins and Their Values. Second edition, 1987, reprinted 1994, 1996. London, pp.33-34; https://www.academia.edu/35768659/History_of_Georgia, p. 204 n. 1). Full picture is presented below.

Half drama of Bagrat III (975-1014), imitation to dirhem (980).

Obverse: Central Arabic legend in three lines – “There is no god but Allāh alone, he has no associate”.

Distorted Arabic legend around.

Reverse: Central Arabic legend – “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh”. Georgian Asomtavruli legend around it – **Christ, exalt** Bagrat, king of the Abkhassians (Western Georgia).

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=39>

David III Kuropalates’ (+1001) coins with the depiction of cross potent (979).

¹ https://www.academia.edu/43970986/Pious_Formulas_on_Georgian_Money

Obverse: Georgian legend – “**Christ, forgive** David”.

Reverse: Cross potent on the four steps and Georgian legend – “Kurapalati”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=40>

Bagrat IV (1027-1072). I emission. 1055.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Greek legend – “the Holy Virgin”, close to nimbus, in different ways.

Reverse: Marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** Bagrat, king of the Abkhasians” (Western Georgia). In the center – “and Nobilissimos”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=41>

Bagrat IV. II emission. 1068/69.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Greek legend – “the Holy Virgin”, close to nimbus, in different ways.

Reverse: Marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** Bagrat, king of the Abkhasians” (Western Georgia). In the center – “and Sebastos”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=42>

Giorgi II (1072-1089). I emission. 1073.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Distorted Greek abbreviation for “the Holy Virgin”, to l. and r. from nimbus. Greek legend – MP ΘY – appears sometime.

Reverse: Marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** Giorgi, king of the Abkhasians and the Kartvelians” (Eastern and Southern Georgia). In the center – “and Nobilissimos”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=43>

Giorgi II. II emission. 1074.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Distorted Greek abbreviation for “the Holy Virgin”, to l. and r. from nimbus. Some specimens have different legend – “St. Virgin Blachernitissa”.

Reverse: Marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** Giorgi, king of the Abkhasians and the Kartvelians”. In the center – “and Sebastos”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=44>

Giorgi II. III emission. 1075-1089.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Distorted Greek abbreviation for “the Holy Virgin”, to l. and r. from nimbus. Some specimens have different legend – “St. Virgin Blachernitissa”.

Reverse: Marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** Giorgi, king of the Abkhasians and the Kartvelians”. In the center – “and Caesaros”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=45>

David IV (1089-1125). I emission. 1089-1099.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Greek legend – MP – ΘY, to l. and r. from nimbus.

Reverse: Marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** David, king of the Abkhasians”. In the center – “and Sebastos”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=46>

David IV. II emission. 1089-1099.

Obverse: Facing bust of Virgin orans, nimbate, wearing pallium and maphorium. Greek legend MP – ΘY, to l. and r. from nimbus.

Reverse: Cross in the center and marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, exalt** David, king and Sebastos (?)”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=47>

David IV. III emission. 1118-1125.

Obverse: Bust of a king in Imperial coat – wearing stemma (Imperial crown), divitision and chlamys; holds in right hand scepter cruciger, and in left, globus cruciger. And Georgian legend – “King David”.

Reverse: Cross in a center and marginal Georgian legend – “**Christ, David** the king of the Abkhasians, Kartvelians, Ranians, Kakhეთians, Armenians” (Rani and Kakheti are very Eastern provinces of Georgia).

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=48>

Issues of Demetre I (1125-1156). 1136-1152.

Obverse: First Georgian Asomtavruli letter of the name Demetre in the center of octagonal frame. Arabic legend outside the frame – “King of the Kings, **sword of the Messiah**” – stylized and represents the part of the frame.

Reverse: Arabic legend inside rosette shows the names of Caliph al-Muktafi li-amr Allāh (1136-1160) and the Seljuk sultan Ghias ad-din Masud (1133-1152).
<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=63>

“Irregularly” struck copper coin of David V (1155).

Obverse: Arabic legend in three lines, the following fragments of which are extant – “King of the Kings, **sword of the Messiah** David...”. To the right, unknown sign is placed vertically. Fragment of a linear circle and a part of marginal legend.

Reverse: Arabic legend in three lines – “Muhammad sultan [the mightiest], son of Mah[mud]”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=64>

Issues of Giorgi III (1156-1184) with Asomtavruli letter. 1156-1160.

Obverse: First Georgian Asomtavruli letter of the name Giorgi inside rosette made up of waving lines and Arabic legend – “King of the Kings Giorgi, **sword of the Messiah**”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in waved rosette – “al-Muktafi li-amr Allāh (1136-1160), ruler of the believers”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=65>

Coins of Giorgi III – king with falcon on hand. 1174.

Obverse: Giorgi III in Asian-Byzantine dress. Seated cross-legged, facing. His left (sometimes right) hand rests on his thigh, on another hand up lifted sits a falcon. King wears stemma. Georgian Mkhedruli letters for the name of Giorgi (sometimes Asomtavruli monogram is added to it) and Asomtavruli legend – “In the K’oronikon 394 (=1174)”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in three lines – “King of the Kings Giorgi, son of Demetre, **sword of the Messiah**”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=66>

Coins of Giorgi III and Tamar. 1178-1184.

Obverse: In the center of an ornamented hexagonal rosette two Georgian Asomtavruli letters for the name Giorgi. Asomtavruli legend outside rosette – “**May God exalt** King of the Kings”.

Reverse: In the center of rosette the first letter of the name Tamar or various abbreviations of her name. Asomtavruli legend outside rosette – “**May God**

exalt king and queen”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=67>

Coins of queen Tamar (1184-2010) with her signature. 1187.

Obverse: Signature of Tamar in the center of a wreathed frame. Georgian Asomtavruli marginal legend – “**In the name of God**, this silver piece was struck in the K’oronikon 407 (=1187)”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in five lines – “The great queen, **glory of the world and faith**, Tamar, daughter of Giorgi, **champion of the Messiah, may God increase** her victories”.

Circle around and marginal Arabic legend – “**May God increase** her glory, and **lengthen** her shadow, and **strengthen** her prosperity”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=68>

Coins of Tamar and David with the “Bagrationi family badge”. 1200.

Obverse: Specific badge in the center which is thought to be the “Bagrationi family badge”. To the left and right Georgian Asomtavruli letters for the names of Tamar and David. Above and below Asomtavruli letters – “In the K’oronikon 420 (=1200)”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in four lines – “Queen of the Queens, **glory of the world and faith**, Tamar, daughter of Giorgi, **champion of the Messiah**”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=70>

Coins of Giorgi IV (1210-1223) with the legend “Giorgi, son of Tamar”. 1210.

Obverse: Georgian Asomtavruli legend in the center of a wreathed frame – “Giorgi, son of Tamar”. Marginal Asomtavruli legend – “**In the name of God**, this silver piece was struck in the K’oronikon 430 (=1210)”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in four lines – “King of the Kings, glory of the world and faith, Giorgi, son of Tamar, **sword of the Messiah**”. Circle around. Persian legend outside the circle – “**In the name of the most saint God** this silver piece was struck in the year 430”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=71>

Coins of Giorgi IV with the legend “Of king Giorgi...lord of the Javakhs”. 1207-1210.

Obverse: Georgian Asomtavruli legend in four lines – “Of king Giorgi, son of

Tamar, lord of the Javakhs”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in four lines – “The great king, **glory of the world and faith**, Giorgi, son of Tamar, **sword of the Messiah**.”

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=72>

Coins of Giorgi IV – king in Imperial dress. 1210.

Obverse: King standing, facing, wearing stemma, with labarum in his right hand and anexikakia, a roll of parchment, wrapped in cloth and filled with dust, a symbol of mortality, in left. Fragments of Asomtavruli legend to both sides of the depiction – “Giorgi, son of Tamar ... 30, i.e. in the K’oronikon 430 (=1210)”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in rosette made up of four leaves – “In the year 606 (=1209/1210)”. Second Arabic legend in segments between the leaves – “King of the Kings Giorgi, son of Tamar, **sword of the Messiah**”. Circle around.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=73>

The “regularly” struck copper coins of queen Rusudan (1223-1245). 1227.

Obverse: Georgian Asomtavruli letters for Rusudan’s name in the center of an ornamented frame. Above, small-sized twisted sign, which is either Rusudan’s monogram, or her “signature”. Between the leaves of the frame date – “In the K’oronikon 447 (=1227)”.

Reverse: Arabic legend in four lines – “Queen of the Kings and Queens, **glory of the world, kingdom and faith**, Rusudan, daughter of Tamar, **champion of the Messiah, may God increase her victories**”. Circle around.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=74>

Silver coins of Rusudan with the effigy of Christ. 1230.

Obverse: Bust of Christ facing, wearing nimbus, pallium and colobium and raising right hand in benediction, holds ornamented book of Gospels in left hand. Greek legend: IC XC. Marginal Georgian Asomtavruli legend – “In the name of God, was struck in the K’oronikon 450 (=1230)”.

Reverse: In the center of an ornamented frame, which is reminiscent of a badge depicted on queen Tamar’s coin dated by 1200, three Asomtavruli letters for the name Rusudan. Marginal Arabic legend – “Queen of the Queens, **glory of the world and faith**, Rusudan, daughter of Tamar, **champion of the Messiah**”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=49>

Copper coins of David VII Ulugh (1247-1270) with the depiction of a horseman.

Obverse: Crowned figure of a horseman to the right. To both sides of the effigy – Georgian Asomtavruli letters for the name David.

Reverse: Arabic legend in three lines – “King of the Kings David, son of Giorgi, **sword of the Messiah**”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=53>

Copper coins of Demetre II (1270-1289) with the “Bagrationi family badge”. 1280.

Obverse: Ornamented frame, much reminiscent of the one on Rusudan’s copper coins. In the center, Georgian Asomtavruli letters for the name Demetre; out, differently placed, Georgian legends – “King” or “King of the Kings”, and in some cases “K’oronikon 500 (=1280)”.

Reverse: In the center, the same badge as on David’s and Tamar’s coin. Around border of the dots, Christian prayer in Asomtavruli – “**We believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit**”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=54>

Silver coins of David VIII (1293-1311) with the Christian prayer. 1297.

Obverse: Arabic legend in four lines – “The most mighty king, sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan, may God perpetuate his reign”.

Reverse: Area within square of dots, Christian prayer in four lines in Arabic – “**In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God**”. Georgian legend – “King David”. The segments between square and outer circle contain date formula, which is A.H. 696 (=1296/97). According to the months given on the coins, it became clear that their issue continued for four months (seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth) of A.H. 696, which corresponds to April–July period of 1297.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=55>

Copper coins of David VIII with the “Bagrationi family badge”.

Obverse: In the center of an ornamented frame Georgian Asomtavruli letters for the name David. Out, Georgian legend – “King of the Kings”. Sometimes below “K’oronikon 530 (=1310)”.

Reverse: Finely depicted “Bagrationi family badge” with the Christian prayer

in Asomtavruli letters – “**We believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit**”. Left and right to this badge sometimes is placed “K’oronikon 530 (=1310)”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=56>

Coins of Vakhtang III (1297-1308) with the Christian prayer. 1298/99.

Obverse: Uighur legend in four lines – “Struck by Ghazan in the name of Qāʾān”.

Reverse: Area within linear square; in center, cross within linear circle and a Christian prayer in Arabic around cross – “**In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit**”. There are two Georgian Asomtavruli monograms read as king Vakhtang. Between square and outer circle a date in Arabic – “Struck in the year 698 (=1298/99)” and one of the months of the coin’s issue.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=57>

Copper coins of Bagrat V (?) (1360-1393).

Obverse: First Georgian Asomtavruli letter for the name Bagrat placed in the center, within the linear circle. Asomtavruli legend around the circle reads as “**In the name of God**”.

Reverse: Distorted Arabic legend in four lines.

https://www.academia.edu/37315053/Giorgi_Dundua_Tedo_Dundua_CATALOGUE_OF_GEORGIAN_NUMISMATICS, pp. 284-285.

Silver coin of Alexandre I (1412-1442). 1412.

Obverse: In the center, Georgian Asomtavruli letter for the date. Around, Asomtavruli legend which on some well-preserved samples can be read as follows – “King of the Kings Alexandre”.

Reverse: Georgian legend in two lines – “**In the name of god**”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=62>

Coins of Vakhtang IV (1442-1446) with Asomtavruli legends.

Obverse: Georgian legend in three lines – “**God, long live**”.

Reverse: Again, a legend in three lines which continues the legend on the obverse – “King Vakhtang”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=75>

Coins of Giorgi VIII (1446-1466) with the title “King of the Kings”.

Obverse: Georgian Asomtavruli legend in four lines – “King of the Kings, slave of God, Giorgi”.

Reverse: Cross.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=77>

Coins of David X (1505-1525).

Obverse: Georgian legend in three lines – “**God, long live**”.

Reverse: Again, a legend in three lines which continues the legend on the obverse – “King David”.

<http://geonumismatics.tsu.ge/en/catalogue/types/?type=82>

That is all. After, Christian pious formulas completely disappeared on the coins.